

Energizing Through Movement Icebreakers

Fruit Salad

Put chairs in a circle and have participants sit in the chairs, facing into the circle. The facilitator should stand in the middle of the circle without a chair assigned to her/him.



Assign each participant to one of three fruits: orange, apple, or banana (or others). The facilitator should also be assigned to a fruit. Make sure there is a relatively even mix of the different fruit assignments. The facilitator stands in the center of the circle and calls out one or two of the fruits. Anyone assigned to that fruit must stand up and find a newly vacated chair in the circle, including the facilitator. Whoever is left without a chair becomes the facilitator in the center whose turn it is to call out a fruit or two. The facilitator can also call “fruit salad” which means *all* participants must find a new seat.

A variation of this activity involves the same set-up. However, instead of assigning and calling out a fruit, play the game as “The big wind blows...” and follow that sentence with something which describes some of the people sitting in the group (e.g. anyone wearing jeans, people with dark hair, anyone born in the first half of the year, etc.).

Kwasa-Kwasa

(also duplicated in the Teambuilding and Commonalities icebreakers)

This is a good, quick activity to break the silence and wake participants up after sitting through each in a series of presentations. Following each presentation, have all participants stand up and face the presenter(s). Participants rub their flattened hands together in a circle-like motion, saying “Kwasa-kwasa-kwasa”), clap hands together, and extend one hand toward the presenter(s). The gesture is meant to say “well-done” to the presenter(s).

This activity was generated in southern Africa, and the words represent the name of a dance, the “kwasa-kwasa”. You can use any other word, phrase, or made-up sound, and/or any other type of movement your group may enjoy, of course. The point is that the participants, by offering appreciation to the presenter through physical expression, remain engaged in the session. This can be used throughout a training session, a conference, or within a classroom regularly.

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Reach For Your Goals

This momentary activity is good to get energy flowing around the room after sitting for a while, or prior to transitioning to another activity. Simply ask participants to stand and raise their arms above their head, reaching toward the ceiling or sky. Tell participants to “reach for your goals (or reach for your clients’ goals)!”

Spider Web

(also duplicated in the Teambuilding and Commonalities icebreakers)

(This commonly used activity involves a fair bit of physical contact and may be difficult for people in long dresses or loose clothing, so you must determine whether or not it is appropriate for your group.)

Create groups of 5-8 participants, and ask each group to move to an area where they can stand in a small circle. Tell participants to hold hands with two different people in their group, one hand per person, but only with someone who is not immediately to their right or left. Once all participants are holding hands with two different individuals, tell them they have created a spider web and they cannot let go of each other’s hands. Each group must then untangle its spider web while not releasing hands.

After the groups have finished, facilitators can lead a discussion with the groups on communication, teamwork, and the different roles team members may have played.

This communication and teamwork exercise works best in groups of five to eight participants, but can also be effective with larger groups. If working with a larger group, try conducting the exercise twice: first with smaller groups, and then with one large group.